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The Snake-eaters Might Want One Too

by

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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30 October 2006

Abstract

The Snake-eaters Might Want One Too

We can win the “hot war.” We can out-shoot, out-move, and out-communicate any force lined up against us. In stark contrast, success during shaping operations and post conflict reconstruction is often met with abject indifference. We are the best organized, best trained, best equipped, and best educated killing machine the world has ever seen. We are exceptionally good at our core capability. We are not, however, adept at nation building; Security, Stabilization, Transition, and Reconstruction (SSTR); or coalition building. We must get better. The importance of interagency coordination, the complexity of operations, and the need for clearer guidance and directives has been recognized for nearly a century. Codifying the progress that has been made to date and expanding upon the successes will require legislative action of the Goldwaters-Nichols variety.

INTRODUCTION

The importance of interagency coordination, the complexity of operations, and the need for clearer guidance and directives has been recognized for nearly a century; codifying the progress that has been made to date and expanding upon the successes will require legislative action of the Goldwaters-Nichols variety. The complex environment in which military forces operate today demands greater coordination and integration with all elements of national power. In today's military environment the proceeding statement is ubiquitous. This discussion of the challenges will only site a few of the thousands of research papers, articles, monographs, data collection efforts, U.S. Government (USG) Departmental-level statements, books, and other documents. "There are no defined principles of "Joint Action" between the State Department and the Navy Department by which the latter is to be restricted or guided, when its representatives become involved in situations calling for such cooperation."¹ The Marine Corps' Small Wars Manual (Reprint of 1940 Edition) is often noted in contemporary literature to illustrate the point that we are seeing nothing new. Often, its relevance to ongoing operations is questioned because it was authored in a "simpler time."

As the argument goes, commanders today are faced with far more complex issues than those faced in the past. Col Matthew Bogdanos, who lived these challenges at US Central Command (USCENTCOM) put it this way, "...in a world increasingly dominated by the need for the swift identification, integration, and use of the capabilities of multiple agencies, effective interagency coordination has emerged as the best way to defeat today's threats."² Col Bogdanos was faced with the challenge of coordinating operations that ran the gamut from major conflict to civil administration during both Operation Enduring Freedom

¹ United States Marine Corps, *Small Wars Manual*, Reprint 1940 ed. 1987, Chapt 1, 33.

² Matthew Bogdanos, "Joint Interagency Cooperation: The First Step," *Joint Force Quarterly*, Issue 37, 2005, 18.

(OEF) (Afghanistan), and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). “As to its function, [a] military government founded on actual occupation is an exercise of sovereignty, and as such dominates the country which is its theater in all branches of administration whether administered by officers of the occupying forces or by civilians left in office.”³ The Small Wars Manual goes on to discuss in detail the importance of selecting the appropriate officers for specific duties. This discussion identified key areas of expertise that need to be addressed such as, military governor (Major General), civil affairs, public works, fiscal affairs (treasury), public health and sanitation, schools and charitable institutions, legal department, and constabulary. The manual further mentions the importance of planning and understanding local conditions.⁴ The purpose of noting the challenges and complexity identified in the Small Wars Manual, and juxtaposing those observations with Col Bogdanos’ observations nearly seventy years later is to drive home the point that the Department of Defense (DoD) and other agencies have been aware of the challenges for a long time and that the complexity of those challenges has not changed much in decades that separated the observations.

Two conditions, however, have changed since that time create a renewed imperative to solve the interagency problem. The first is globalization and the ease with which we are able to travel and communicate. This fact has had the affect of introducing more resources; other agencies and actors; increasing the number, potential origin, and variety of threats; and coordination requirements. The second change is the impact of terrorism’s increased scope, activity, coordination, and lethality. We must position ourselves to adequately address these changes or we will fall victim to them. *Again, the importance of interagency coordination,*

³ United States Marine Corps, Chapt. 13, p. 2.

⁴ Ibid., 6.

the complexity of operations, and the need for clearer guidance and directives has been recognized for nearly a century; codifying the progress that has been made to date and expanding upon the successes will require legislative action of the Goldwaters-Nichols variety. Nothing short of a forcing function with the weight of law, well defined benchmarks and measures of effectiveness (MOE), and some tangible incentives and repercussions will move DoD and other government agencies (OGA) beyond the point we are at today.

DISCUSSION / ANALYSIS

In 1997, the Center for Naval Analysis (CNA) published a study intended to assist the Marine Corps in conducting humanitarian assistance (HA) operations. This effort reviewed four significant HA operations that occurred during the 1990s; Operation Sea Angel, Operation Provide Comfort, Operation Restore Hope, and Operation Joint Endeavor. CNA observed, “The key issue we found associated with civil-military relations is coordination: The military (and civilian organizations) needs to know who to coordinate with, what to coordinate, and how to coordinate.” Considerable effort was dedicated to identifying the kinds of activities to be coordinated and the agencies with which to coordinate. Additionally, CNA identified the kinds of tasks that should be coordinated with OGAs in order to achieve efficiencies, avoid duplication of effort, to fill gaps in military capabilities, and gaps in civilian capabilities. The study also addressed *how* to accomplish the coordination; noting that during each operation some organization was established within the Task Force to facilitate coordination, reduce duplication of effort, and increase unity of effort between the military and the other agencies involved.⁵

Today’s answer to CNA’s observation is the Joint Interagency Coordination Group (JIACG). Col Bogdanos identified the JIACG as USCENTCOM’s solution to the

⁵ Sandra Newett and Laura Trader, “The Process for Determining Military Tasks in Humanitarian Assistance Operations,” Alexandria, VA: Center for Naval Analyses, July 1997, 1-2, 8, 21-22.

interagency challenge. According to Col Bogdanos, the JIACG was effective from its inception and saw direct, positive impact when it was deployed in OEF, on the ground in Afghanistan as the Joint Interagency Task Force-Counter Terrorism (JIATF-CT). He argues that the JIACG is the organization DoD should adopt for future interagency coordination.⁶ Within DoD, U.S. Joint Forces Command (USJFCOM), whose mission in part is to, “...support the development and integration of joint, interagency, and multinational capabilities to meet the present and future operational needs of the joint force...”⁷ has also identified the JIACG as DoD’s solution to the interagency challenge. In a June 2004 pamphlet describing JIACGs it was clear that all Geographic Combatant Commanders (GCC) fully support the new organization and have made progress toward creating a JIACG within their own commands. However, several concerns were identified: “...(1) the lack of secure connectivity with parent agencies that makes it difficult to get timely inputs to JIACG products; (2) the need to stabilize and retain personnel; and (3) agreed on “value added” effectiveness measures to determine if parent agency personnel commitments are worth the investment.”⁸

These comments should not be construed to indicate a lack of support for, or an acknowledgement that the JIACG’s time has not yet come. Instead, they should be viewed as an indicator of the difficulty faced by GCCs in the interagency arena. One need only consider that the evolution of DoD’s staffing of joint billets and production of Joint Staff Officers (JSO) to understand what we are facing. The communication challenge likely has a material solution already on the shelf, it only requires selection and implementation; resource

⁶ Bogdanos, 6, 18.

⁷ United States Joint Forces Command, “Command mission and priorities,” <http://www.jfcom.mil/about/priorities.htm>, (accessed 25 October 2006).

⁸ United States Joint Forces Command, “Doctrinal Implications of the Joint Interagency Coordination Group (JIACG),” *The Joint Warfighting Center Joint Doctrine Series*, Pamphlet 6, 27 June 2004, 3.

intensive investments. The latter two challenges however, point to a deeper and subtler challenge. The challenge is cultural. It speaks to breaking down traditional boundaries and establishing new formal and informal relationships.⁹ Initially there was significant resistance within DoD regarding “jointness.”

Although all services within DoD have come around to supporting joint activities, some bureaucratic inertia remains even today. Understand that DoD’s JSO problems are within DoD; within a single department. Imagine now, attempting to achieve some level of practical, habitual relationship among and between various Departments and agencies across the Federal government. Imagine the difficulty in identifying and maintaining desired levels of staffing, the requisite skill sets, and key agency representation. The necessary structural organizational changes, potential manpower increases, process changes, and cultural changes will not and have not occurred as a result of well intentioned, formal and informal relationships that have developed in the last several years. Many of these relationships have formed as a result of the necessity borne of on-going operations. Additionally, Presidential Decision Directive (PDD) 56 “Managing Complex Contingency Operations” (May 1997),¹⁰ and National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD) 1 “Organization of the National Security Council System” (February 2001)¹¹ directed Secretariat/Principal-level coordination and other activities to foster greater military/civilian coordination and greater coordination across the Federal government. Despite the efforts and directives, we remain far from a

⁹ James Carafano, "Herding Cats: Understanding Why Government Agencies Don't Cooperate and How to Fix the Problem," *Heritage Lectures*, No. 955, 15 June 2006, 3.

¹⁰ President, Presidential Decision Directive 56, “Managing Complex Contingency Operations” May 1997, *Small Wars Journal*, <http://www.smallwarsjournal.com/documents/pdd56.pdf>, (accessed 10 October 2006).

¹¹ President, National Security Presidential Directive 1, “Organization of the National Security Council System” 13 February 2001.

practical government-wide accepted solution. As noted above, some kind of forcing function and MOE is demanded.

Quite simply, there is too much at stake today. In his paper, James Carafano argues we do interagency pretty well at the Principal level in Washington DC and at the tactical level where personal coordination and cooperation is accomplished face-to-face and driven by urgent operational necessity. The problem, according to Dr. Carafano, is at the operational level.¹² He offers eight reasons why the process is flawed, these are: (1) tradition, that is the separation of the military from domestic and other government agencies; (2) Congress, which he argues is incapable of promoting cooperation; (3) professional development, the need for a shared body of knowledge, common experiences, trust and confidence; (4) operational organization, each Federal agency has its own distinct organization; (5) capacity, outside DoD, few Federal agencies are staffed to support the additional manpower requirements; (6) inspectors general for appropriate oversight of operations; (7) politics, politicians are sensitive to the perception of an expanding government; and (8) operational models, actually a lack of effective operational models, the “lead agency” model is the most common framework used. Although practical, the lead agency framework lacks any real authority over the various Federal agencies that might participate.¹³

It is interesting that the Carafano article would dismiss the key role Congress can play in getting GCCs and Federal agencies beyond the present bureaucratic inertia. It took Congressional action to break down the walls that had formed between the Services. That

¹² Carafano, 2.

¹³ Carafano, 3-4.

action has been very successful. Congressional action can break the current bureaucratic impasse.

Additionally, the JIACG is clearly an effective organizational model that can be adapted to suit the unique needs of each GCC. The idea that each structure within each GCC must be unique cannot be overemphasized. Certainly certain core functions are likely to be the same; however, it would be foolish to imagine that USCENTCOM and U. S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM) could be adequately served with the same JIACG organizational structure. One can argue that the organization already exists within each GCC, and that these organizations are unique. One can also argue that these various JIACGs are operating adequately for the respective commands as structured, supported, and organized today. “Adequate” is no longer good enough. The JIACG needs to be supported fully in order that the organization can realize its full potential and allow for the application of the full range of our national power. All that is lacking is some directive authority to force all involved to bring the required manpower and resources to the table – and leave them there.

The time is right to take on the challenge of institutionalizing a JIACG-type organization at the GCCs that is fully supported throughout the Federal government. The Department of State (DoS) is currently pursuing “Transformational Diplomacy.” Collaboration figures prominently in this transformational effort,

“...Success in transformational diplomacy requires collaborations that result in the more effective dispersion of people and programs to share information on common platforms. Vital to this vision is continued collaboration between civilians and the military. Diplomats must be able to work effectively at the critical intersections of diplomatic affairs, economic reconstruction, and military operations.”¹⁴

¹⁴ U. S. Department of State, Office of the Spokesman, “Transformational Diplomacy,” <http://www.state.gov/issuesandpress>, (accessed 8 September 2006).

In addition to the DoS's interest, several bills have been presented to Congress over the past several years aimed at improving the Nation's ability to better engage in activities such as nation building and reconstruction. As mentioned earlier, these kinds of activities tend to force together agencies that do not ordinarily work together. Seams and inefficiencies are exposed. Congress gets the message. For example; in February 2004, Senators Richard Lugar, R-Indiana, Chuck Hagel, R-Nebraska, and Joseph Biden, D-Delaware, introduced the Stabilization and Reconstruction Civilian Management Act of 2004; in June 2003, Senators John Edwards, D-North Carolina, Jack Reed, D-Rhode Island, and Pat Roberts, R-Kansas, introduced the Winning the Peace Act.¹⁵ Both of these acts essentially aimed at establishing a new Department level organization, on par with the DoD or DoS to head nation building and reconstruction efforts.

The point is, Congress has already considered taking action. Establishing a new government department is an expensive short-term proposition; it is also a significant long-term investment. There are people in Congress today who recognize the importance of getting this right and they are willing to consider the investment it will require to accomplish the goal. In the context of the global war on terrorism (GWOT), one of the most salient points made by the 9-11 Commission Report is the need for improved coordination and information sharing among government agencies.¹⁶ Again, there is an imperative for action at the Congressional level. The time is right today to pursue the kinds of legislative authorities that will be necessary to properly facilitate, staff and equip an organization such as the JIACG. What is missing is someone, some organization to take the lead. Given

¹⁵ Traci Hukill, "Congress weighs creating nation-building agency," *National Journal*, 3 May 2003, <http://www.govexec.com/dailyfed/0504/050304nj1.htm>, (accessed 14 September 2006).

¹⁶ National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, *The 9/11 Commission report : final report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States*, Authorized ed., (New York: W. W. Norton: 2004), 400-423.

DoD's key role in the nation building, Security, Stabilization, Transition, and Reconstruction (SSTR), coalition building, and the GWOT effort, it makes sense that DoD should take the lead in the effort.

The GCC will benefit a great deal from a more robust JIACG. The fact is the operations that the GCC must participate in today require significant planning investment in both shaping operations (nation building) and SSTR. Every GCC has an engagement strategy also called a Theater Security Cooperation Plan (TSCP). Even today, these plans are carefully coordinated with the DoS. This coordination helps to ensure that the theater security strategy is consistent with the DoS' mission performance plans (MPP). The work amounts as much to a deconfliction effort as actual coordination. Additionally many shaping, or phase zero operations involve counter narcotics activities. These efforts too will benefit from greater and more consistent participation by the agencies within the Federal government responsible for these activities. Combatant commanders recognize these shaping activities as an enabler to potential follow-on operations. A more robust, experienced, rounded, staff with specific geographic, cultural, and language expertise and functional expertise would be considerably more effective in setting up the commander for success. A core structure of experienced planners from various agencies within the Federal government and DoD who habitually work together would be a tremendous asset to any command; it would be a national asset. The question is, where do these skills come from, how are they secured, and why don't we already have such organizations?

CONCLUSIONS

The task of continuing politics by another means has been evolving into something much more complex, much more subtle, much more chaotic than even Clausewitz had

imagined. As war-fighters, we have made our money closing with and destroying our enemies. We do this through aggressive application of operational art. One fundamental premise within the operational concepts of maneuver warfare, air-land battle, and distributed operations is the notion that reserve forces are used to reinforce or exploit success. The commander continuously scans the operational landscape, looking for an indicator that the enemies' critical vulnerability, weakness, or center of gravity has been discovered, engaged, and is ripe for exploitation. This simple dictum lends a dynamic to operational tempo and force employment that is relentless in its pursuit of that thing which will lead to almost certain victory.

We can win the “hot war.” We can out-shoot, out-move, and out-communicate any force lined up against us. The trouble is there’s no line. They stay home. They wait. In stark contrast, success during shaping operations and post conflict reconstruction is often met with abject indifference. There is little excitement as the “traffic light” on a briefing chart, actually a yellow triangle pointing toward the ceiling, drifts to green. The snake eaters engage in side-bar conversations as the J-5 briefs the latest security cooperation activities. We are the best organized, best trained, best equipped, and best educated killing machine the world has ever seen. We are exceptionally good at our core capability. When we drift into “shaping” the traffic light turns yellow, the triangle points to the floor, and our National Security is put at risk. Fully implementing a JIACG at each GCC with the full support of all relevant Federal agencies will generate the kind of detailed knowledge, the subtle attention and understanding, and the tools to win at nation building, SSTR, coalition building, and the GWOT.

RECOMMENDATIONS

There exists today an opportunity to implement a pilot program with the goal of institutionalizing the JIACG within the GCCs with tangible manpower and informational support across the Federal government. The pilot should provide for three years of temporary authorities to allow Federal agencies to fully explore how best to support implementation of the JIACG organization within each GCC. The recommendation is not to create yet another Federal agency, but to position existing agencies to actively participate in the interagency process as it pertains to nation building, crisis response, and other activities critical national security. Support requirements will include the entire spectrum of resources; budget, manpower, equipment/facility upgrades, and legislative authority. Some core, permanent level of staffing from some Federal agencies will be identified. Efficient, standardized collaboration tools and processes will be identified for those agencies that do not provide permanent personnel support.

The context of the pilot (temporary authority) will specifically assign responsibility for reconstruction in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina to DoS. That is, USNORTHCOM, within the context of the pilot program will be assigned the task of supporting the DoS in a reconstruction effort targeted at the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. The reason for selecting Hurricane Katrina reconstruction as basis for the pilot is, it is a real-world contingency. The situation on the ground has progressed independently of many of the organizations that would be involved in the pilot program. The introduction of the military and other Federal assistance is likely to be welcomed by some, opposed by some, and actively resisted by others. Even a year out, significant reconstruction efforts are still required. Upfront coordination with local government and agencies will be required to identify the missions that Federal agencies might address. A JIACG located in USNORTHCOM is the logical

choice for this effort. Just like during real world crisis response, USNORTHCOM will need to adjust priorities in order to support this effort.

The pilot will have the added benefit of providing USNORTHCOM and other Federal agencies a venue to solidify processes and relationships within the JIACG. By choosing a reconstruction effort within U. S. borders, Federal agencies will be challenged in much the same way as when overseas, but without significant security concerns. Still, for the sake of fully flushing out the concept, use of active duty military forces, DoS, and U. S. Agency for International Development (USAID) personnel will be required. Addressing the temporary statute changes this will require is consistent with the kinds of authorities USCENTCOM had to seek in order to support activities in OEF and OIF. A process to expedite changes to temporary and permanent legislative authorities is a key enabler for nation-building; SSTR; coalition building, and GWOT activities GCCs engage in daily.

The notion of using Hurricane Katrina reconstruction as a basis for a proof of concept pilot for the JIACG should immediately activate a whole host of alarms. Is this really something the military should be doing? Is this how our tax dollars should be spent? Haven't the tax payers already invested enough in this reconstruction? Sound familiar? What about legal questions, who pays, funding authorities, the reimbursement process, will this Federal government/military effort displace local contractors and other private contractors, cultural, law enforcement, traditional roles, limits of jurisdiction, turf wars, political impacts (local and Federal), perception/expectation management (local population, displaced persons, local political establishment, U.S. population, and the Federal government), acceptance of outside assistance; these are just a few of the alarm bells that should be ringing. Let's consider a few of the above concerns.

The first challenge to this effort will be perception management. Military planners are familiar with the statement, “we have to keep “country X’s” face on this operation. It cannot appear as if the U.S. military is driving this effort.” The same will hold true in Katrina reconstruction. Careful coordination will have to take place with the mayor’s office in New Orleans and other areas that suffered in the wake of Katrina. Additionally, there will be members of Congress, the media, other local politicians and the U.S. population that are likely to express concern. The messages need to be crafted early. Care must be taken to ensure long-term support for the plan. The research, analysis, targeting, and delivery of the message is consistent with similar activities that must be addressed during nation building and SSTR efforts.

Legal authorities allowing agencies that do not traditionally act within U.S. borders to participate in the reconstruction will emerge almost immediately. What kinds of activities can DoS, USAID, and the military bring to Katrina reconstruction? It is clear most activities these agencies will do require temporary changes to laws that limit or prohibit their activities within U.S. borders. Once those authorities are addressed, it will become necessary to provide legal authorities to execute funds for activities outside their normal scope. Questions concerning levels of funds dedicated to this effort will need to be addressed. Certainly questions concerning Federal resources already applied to the effort will surface. Questions concerning how much the government is willing to invest will be heard.

Fielding those questions, demonstrating the positive impact of the investment and the intangible future benefits are consistent with the activities personnel involved in nation building and SSTR must engage in daily. Coordinating a consistent message across Federal agencies is critical. The processes for crafting and ensuring consistency are critical.

USCENTCOM has been working with the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) from the beginning of OEF to clear a legislative path to enable commanders on the ground in Afghanistan and Iraq to accomplish their mission.¹⁷ To be sure, there was and is a tremendous amount of Congressional support and understanding of the unique challenges faced by commanders. This is nothing new. The process must be improved. Obviously USCENTCOM's experience should be leveraged in the Katrina effort. Legal authorities regarding SSTR, coalition building, nation building and GWOT activities can also aid in unity of effort and unity of command as lines of directive authority can be better focused through legislation.

There are also likely to be concerns about local and other contractors being displaced by this Federal effort. Like operations overseas, management of this challenge will require a process to validate and approve projects conducted by Federal agencies and distribution of projects to the private sector. Again, although this would be a Federal effort, it will be absolutely critical that the local government drive and direct these efforts with Federal agencies in support.

Congress should pass legislative authority with the same depth, breadth, and with the same directive nature as the Goldwaters-Nichols Act. The initial step in this effort is simple, Congress should provide temporary authority to allow government agencies to participate in a pilot program aimed at: 1) identifying gaps in existing legislative authorities that may prevent seamless coordination, and where necessary integration of Federal agency

¹⁷ Congress, House, Making Supplemental Appropriations for Further Recovery from and Response to Terrorist Attacks on the United States for the Fiscal Year Ending September 30, 2002, and for Other Purposes, 107th Cong., 2nd sess., H. R. 107-93, sec. 502, 2009, and 2015, (2002). H. R. 107-93 is provided as an example. A review of appropriations and authorization acts from 2001 to present reveals instances too numerous to list here. Legislation appears in the form of authorized funding; extended, expanded, relief from, and new authorities.

capabilities; 2) identify processes to support surge requirements in staffing; 3) identify processes to support coordination at the operational level, single solution communication standard (likely web-based and unclassified); 4) identify key decision makers within each contributing Federal agency; 5) identify steady-state core JIACG staffing (Federal agency, expertise, rank or pay-grade; given unique mission requirements of each GCC, these structures may vary slightly by GCC); 6) identify additional resource requirements across the Federal government; and 7) identify incentives for support and disincentives for failure to support.

If the JIACG is validated as a viable solution to the interagency challenge at the operational level, the insights gained through the pilot program will be used to craft legislation, directive in nature, to implement government-wide support for the JIACG. This legislation will include benchmarks, MOE, resource-based incentives, and resource-based disincentives. Lead time for Federal agency support for the JIACG should be relatively short, two years maximum. Sufficient flexibility needs to be built into the authorities to allow for the future evolution of the concept, future improvements in communications and virtual collaboration.

Implementation of the pilot program suggested above will require the enthusiastic support of all Federal agencies involved – whether they provide a large contribution or a small contribution. If tangible support is not provided from the principle level down to the tactical level – with requisite resources, the activity will not move forward. That something needs to be done to better harness all elements of national power and focus that strength on some challenge is undeniable. The recommendation suggested here will pave the way for a real-world exploration of the kinds of problems that confront operational commanders *every*

time the U.S. government chooses to intervene in world crisis. It will represent a significant investment of resources and time. It should generate a collection of necessary legislative authorities to more efficiently engage in nation building, coalition building, SSTR activities, and focused effort in the GWOT. Finally, it will identify legislation to act as a “forcing function,” directive in nature to cause agencies throughout the Federal government to support GCC JIACGs.

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